

GILLINGHAM

Martin Allen

Forward play in and around the box

Overview:

This session is about creative, quick and inventive forward play in and around the penalty box.

In any set-up, working the ball into advanced central areas can be tough, so it's important to maximise our opportunities to create chances to shoot.

The session practices movement, passing, support and finishing and we'll run it once a week in the lead-up to a match to get players moving, and switched on mentally.

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FORWARD PLAY IN AND AROUND THE BOX

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 50x30 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 14

SESSION TIME

Warm-up 10mins,
Directional 10mins,
5v5 plus neutrals
20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Warm-up

We start with a simple warm-up involving 12 outfield players. Our two keepers warm up separately with the goalkeeping coach.

Setting up as shown on a 25x25-yard area with mannequins positioned in the middle, three pairs of players work in the middle. Two balls are fed in by outer players. Pairs must combine before playing out a different side of the square to another outer player (1a). The pair who are not in possession of a ball must position so as to offer a new inward passing option for the outer player (1b).

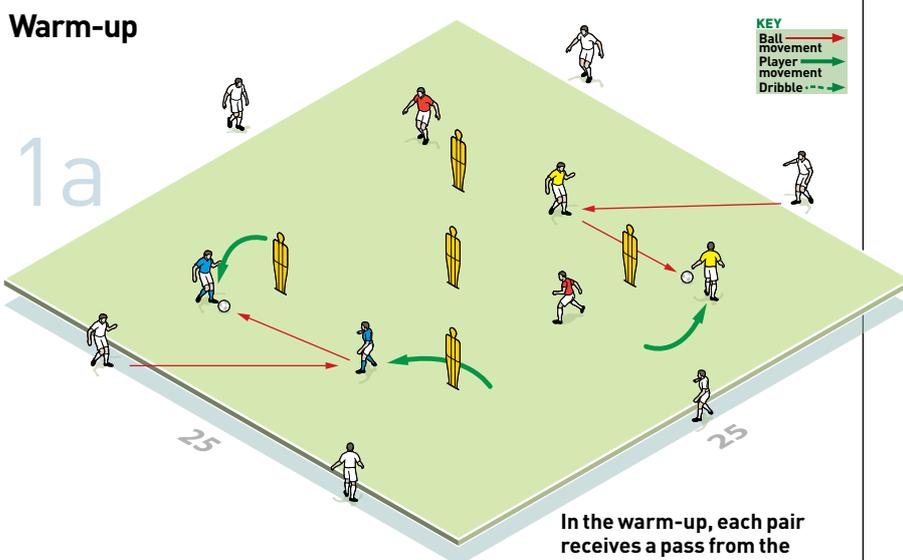
What are the key things to look out for?

We're looking for creation of space, timing and angle of runs, one-touch play where possible and clever movement, such as 'around the corner' passes, wall passes and quick one-twos.

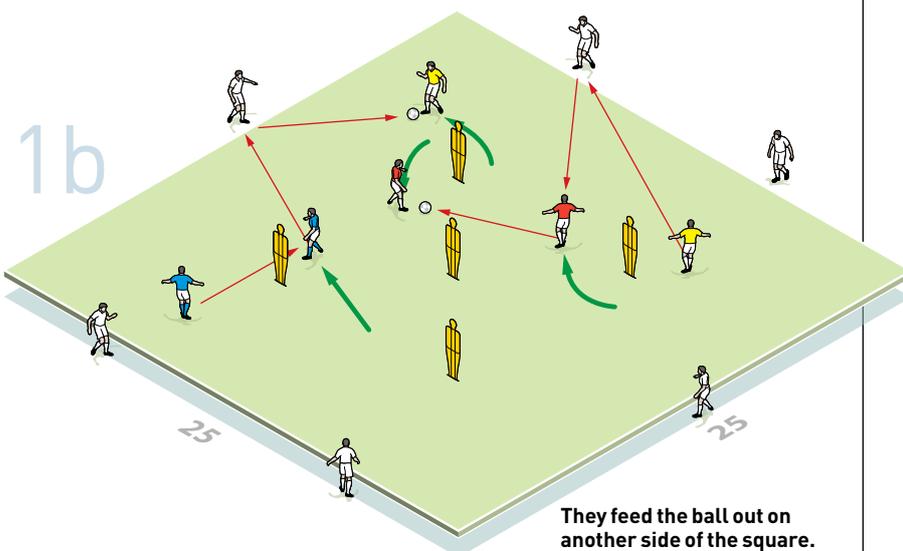
Directional practice

We now use two sets of three players, setting

Warm-up

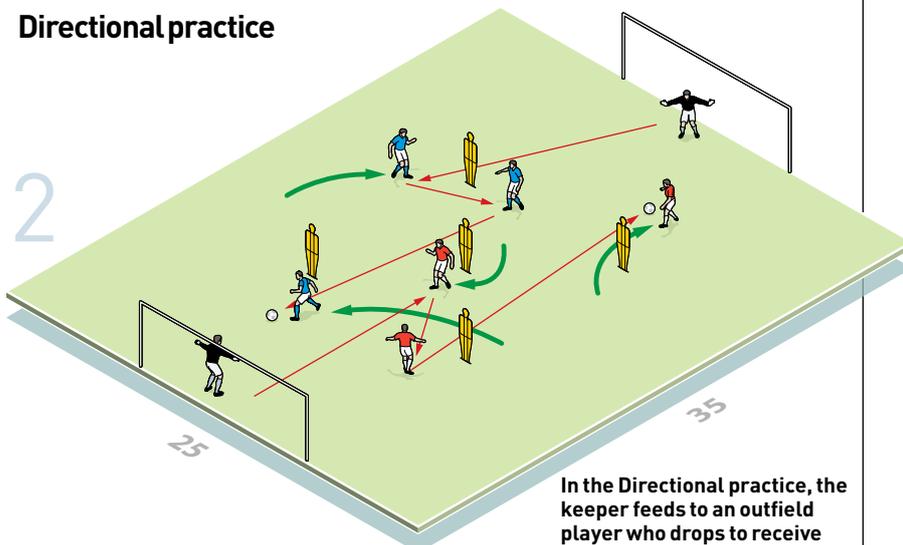


In the warm-up, each pair receives a pass from the outer player, with players combining using short passing



They feed the ball out on another side of the square. It then comes back in to a different pair

Directional practice



In the Directional practice, the keeper feeds to an outfield player who drops to receive before linking up with team mates



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GILLINGHAM

Gillingham manager Martin Allen has enjoyed a sensational first six months in charge at Priestfield, taking the Kent club to the summit of npower League Two whilst overseeing a brand of positive, attacking football.

Arriving in July 2012, Gillingham became the seventh club to fall under the fiery 47-year-old's stewardship, with Allen having started out on the managerial ladder at Barnet in 2003. Spells at Brentford, MK Dons, Leicester City, Cheltenham Town and Notts County followed. He also returned to Barnet twice, on both occasions steering the London club away from relegation danger in League Two.

As a player, 'Mad Dog' was a fearless midfielder who served QPR, West Ham United, Portsmouth and Southend United.

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up the same practice area but with a goal and keeper in place at each end. The keeper feeds the ball into the first player who drops into space to receive and sets to player 2, who feeds the ball into player 3 on the move (2).

What are the key things to look out for?

Now, we're looking at angles and distances of support, quality of first-time passes, a good weight and angle of forward pass and sensible timing of runs.

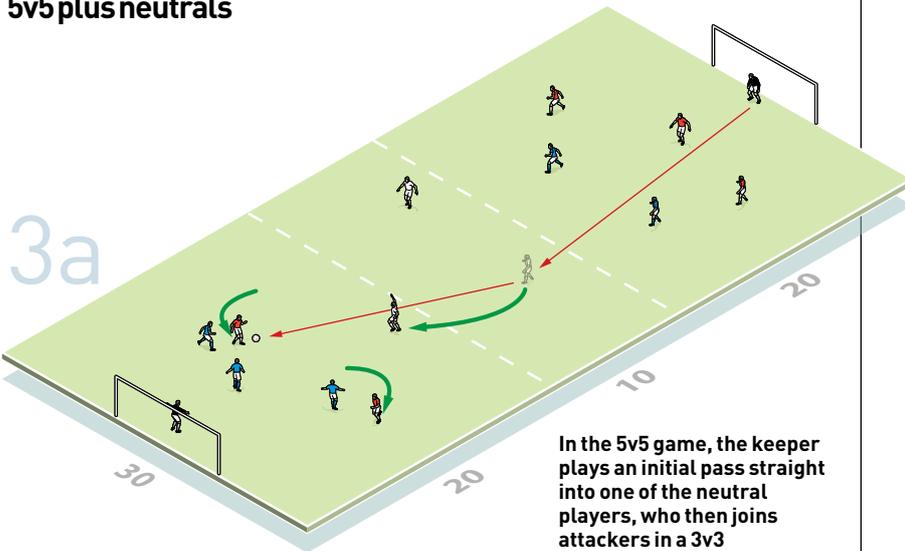
We can progress this activity by removing the mannequins and using passive or active defenders.

5v5 plus neutrals

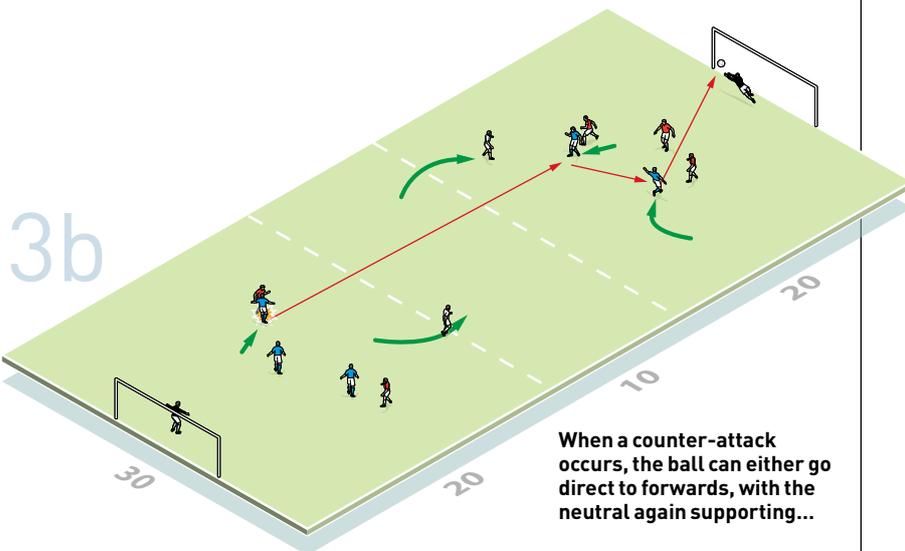
Setting up as shown, the keeper starts by playing into the two neutrals, who in turn play to either striker then join in (3a). It's therefore 3v3 to score, with players using clever and inventive play. The focus must be on creating the opportunity to score, and we allow quick counter-attacks direct into strikers (3b), or via the neutral (3c).

To put this into a game situation we remove the neutral zone and add conditions so that teams can only score after a combination, and only when in the attacking half. Can attackers score by playing one-touch, or after a one-touch assist? ■

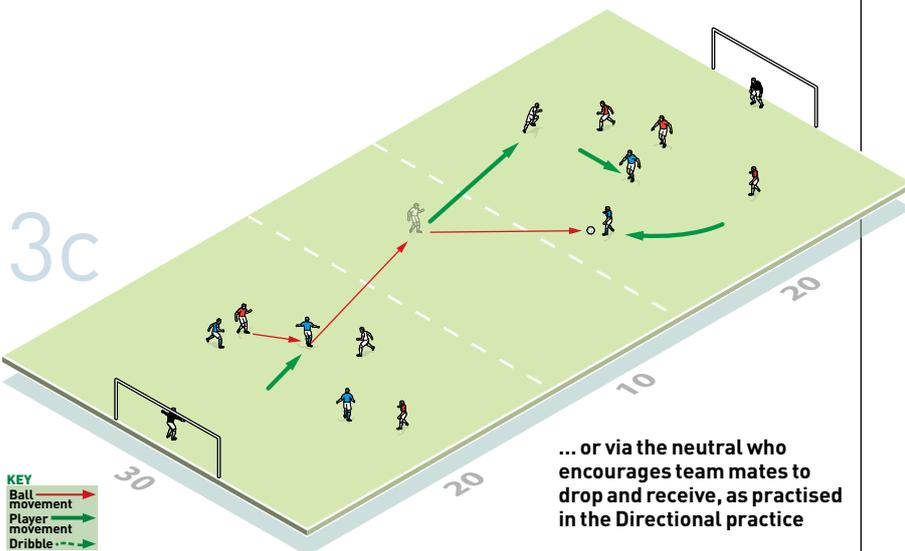
5v5 plus neutrals



In the 5v5 game, the keeper plays an initial pass straight into one of the neutral players, who then joins attackers in a 3v3



When a counter-attack occurs, the ball can either go direct to forwards, with the neutral again supporting...



... or via the neutral who encourages team mates to drop and receive, as practised in the Directional practice

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble →